

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A case-ready package for containing a food product which exudes juice, comprising:

(A) a support member;

(B) a lid member comprising a flexible film; and

(C) an absorbent pad comprising:

(i) an upper web comprising a flexible film;

(ii) a liquid-permeable lower web comprising fiber; and

(iii) an absorbent layer between the upper web and the lower web;

wherein the upper and lower webs each extend outward of the absorbent layer, the upper and lower webs being attached to one another around an entire outer perimeter portion of the pad, with the upper and lower webs together surrounding and containing the absorbent layer.

2. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the lower web comprises nonwoven fiber.

3. The case-ready package according to Claim 2, wherein the nonwoven fiber has a hydrophilic composition thereon.

4. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the package has a modified atmosphere between the support member and the lid member.

5. The case-ready package according to Claim 4, wherein the modified atmosphere comprises oxygen in an amount of from 60 to 80 percent, based on total atmospheric weight within the package.

6. The case-ready package according to Claim 4, wherein the modified atmosphere comprises atmospheric oxygen in an amount less than 5% by volume.

7. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein atmosphere has been substantially evacuated from within the package.

8. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the upper web of the absorbent pad comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of olefin homopolymer, olefin copolymer, polyester, and polyamide.

9. The case-ready package according to Claim 8, wherein the upper web of the absorbent pad comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of

ethylene homopolymer, propylene homopolymer, ethylene copolymer, propylene copolymer, polyester, and polyamide.

10. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the upper web of the absorbent pad is water-impermeable.

11. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fibers comprise at least one member selected from the group consisting of polyolefin and polyester.

12. The case-ready package according to Claim 11, wherein the nonwoven fibers comprise at least one member selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester, and polyamide.

13. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the absorbent layer comprises a layer of wood fluff and a layer of tissue paper.

14. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the absorbent layer further comprises superabsorbent.

15. The case-ready package according to Claim 13, wherein at least some of the superabsorbent is present in granular form.

16. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the upper and lower webs are attached with a heat seal.

17. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the upper and lower webs are attached with an adhesive.

18. The case-ready package according to Claim 1 wherein the support member comprises foam.

19. The case-ready package according to Claim 1, wherein the hydrophilic composition comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of polysorbate, ethoxylated linear alcohol, fatty amine oxide, alkanolamide, and block copolymers of ethylene oxide or propylene oxide with dimethylsiloxane that are coupled to polar groups such as poly(oxyethylene) containing a hydrophilic moiety.

20. The case-ready package according to Claim 19, wherein the hydrophilic composition is present on the second web in an amount of from about 0.1 to 10 weight percent, based on the weight of the second web.

21. A packaged product comprising a food product which exudes juice in a case-ready package comprising:

(A) a support member;

(B) a lid member comprising a flexible film; and

(C) an absorbent pad comprising:

(i) an upper web comprising a flexible film;

(ii) a liquid-permeable lower web comprising fiber; and

(iii) an absorbent layer between the upper web and the lower web;

wherein the upper and lower webs each extend outward of the absorbent layer, the upper and lower webs being attached to one another around an entire outer perimeter portion of the pad, with the upper and lower webs together surrounding and containing the absorbent layer.

22. The packaged product according to Claim 21, wherein the food product comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of meat, poultry, cheese, and produce.

23. A process for making a case-ready package for containing a food product which exudes juice, comprising:

(A) placing a product to be packaged on a support member having a base;

(B) placing an absorbent pad on the support member, the absorbent pad comprising:

(i) an upper web comprising a flexible film;

(ii) a liquid-permeable lower web comprising fiber; and

(iii) an absorbent layer between the upper web and the lower web;

wherein the upper and lower webs each extend outward of the absorbent layer, the upper and lower webs being attached to one another around an entire outer perimeter portion of the pad, with the upper and lower webs together surrounding and containing the absorbent layer;

(C) evacuating atmosphere from around the product and support member;

(D) placing a lid member over the product and the support member so that the product is surrounded by the lid and the support member.

24. The process according to Claim 23, further comprising surrounding the product and support member with a modified atmosphere after evacuation of the atmosphere but before placing the lid member over the product and support member.